



The Ever-Changing Atlas Ministry

January 2023

Relating to God

As Atlas enters 2023 nearing our second anniversary on February 4th, the ministry is in an incredible time of change and growth. In my mellow senior years, I have learned not to serve Christ (doing my own thing for Him) but to simply follow God and join Him where He is working. It sounds simple but, in our humanness, we struggle not to “plan and execute” for Him. At Atlas, we have learned the reality that just following Him makes our service much easier and more effective. Do we fail? Of course! However, if we embrace the goal of following God’s leading and seek it daily, we experience the joy of clients’ lives changed and of unexpected growth in the ministry.

Changing Atlas Priorities

With the recent hiring of Jodi Wollmuth, we established a priority beyond the normal operations of the Atlas ministry for her to concentrate on. That priority was the establishment of an area church and Atlas communication network. It has future components of adding mentoring and ecumenical prayer in the future. As we worked together on that objective, the Atlas advocate (mentoring) program came into a clearer focus. As a result, the top priority shifted from the church network to the advocate program. The church network remains very important but will be delayed as we work to train advocates and match them with clients.

Client Volume is a Welcome Problem

Tonya and I are swamped as we talk with new clients, address their problems, and walk alongside them as their advocate and friend. Add to that the same or greater time demands of existing clients, and our days are full. Client referral analysis is as follows:

• 2021	Average no. of new clients per month	4.25
	New clients in December	10
• 2022	Average no. of new clients per month	4.95
	New clients in December	11
• 2023	New clients in the first 3 weeks of January	15

Referrals are one measure of ministry activity but the true measure is in client contacts, and that is impossible to accurately record. Tonya kept a record of our primary client contacts for January and identified 42 contacts that had significant time invested in them. I evaluated a single day for client interactions and found that I had 15 texts, 23 phone conversations, 13 emails, and 2 scheduled appointments for a total of 53 clients that one day.

Where Do We Go From Here?

The need is great, and as we serve a greater number of people, we have less time with each client. We know that all we can do is what God asks of us and he will provide the means to better allow us to guide our clients to a better life in Christ.

The first step is developing the advocate program and involving volunteers with a heart to walk alongside others and help them to a future beyond the Atlas office. We have several people willing to provide this service but would love to discuss the program with anyone who may wish to “adopt” someone to share their life with.

In the future, we plan on paid staff mentors to provide the in-between interaction with clients that moves them from their first contact with Atlas to a point where they will be comfortable building a new relationship with a volunteer advocate.

How Can You Help?

If you live in the Lakes Area, you can volunteer with Atlas. Wherever you are, you can pray for the Atlas ministry and the clients we serve. And finally, if you are moved by God, you can contribute financially to help us provide more complete and relational service to our clients. Thank you to those of you who have already been a part of serving Atlas in these ways and we welcome additional members to the Atlas partnership team.